

## Essential Agreements

Making Your Sentences Work:  
Subject-Verb Agreement  
Run-ons & Fragments

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

The subject is the actor.



The verb shows the action.

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- The subject and verb must agree:
  - If the subject is **singular**, the verb must be **singular**.
  - If the subject is **plural**, the verb must be **plural**.



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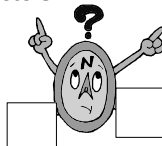
## Subject-Verb Agreement

- Saturday **nights rock** with sound at Sandy's club downtown.
  - *Nights* is plural, so *rock* must be plural.
- Sandy's **club rocks** with music every Saturday night.
  - *Club* is singular, so *rocks* must be singular.

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- To make a noun **plural**, add **-s**.
  - desk, desks
  - car, cars
  - sister, sisters
- To make (most) verbs **singular**, add **-s**.
  - They act; he acts.
  - They sip; she sips.



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## Subject-Verb Agreement

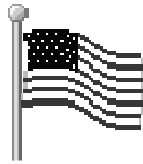
- But don't be **fooled** by unusual plural nouns:
  - Randy's **children love** their new toys.
- ... or irregular verbs:
  - **She has** to leave.
  - **They have** to go.



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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- In American English, **group nouns** are usually singular:
  - The **team** wins.
  - The **staff** is present.
  - Your **group** meets here.
  - The **committee** has assembled.
- If your singular group noun sounds wrong, make it plural by adding **members**:
  - The staff **members** are present.



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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- A compound subject joined by **and** is plural:
  - **Mom and I** are here.
  - **Tracye and her sisters** have left.
  - **Yuri and Lara** eat their dinner late.
- **Except** for a few English idioms:
  - **Bacon and eggs** is my favorite breakfast.
  - **Spaghetti and meatballs** is my specialty!



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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- A compound subject joined by **or** (or **nor**) can be singular or plural.
- The part of the subject **closest** to the verb determines the verb:
  - Maggie's sisters **or** her brother **pays** the bill tonight.
  - Maggie's brother **or** her sisters **pay** the bill tonight.

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- A compound subject joined by **or** (or **nor**) can be singular or plural.
- The part of the subject **closest** to the verb determines the verb:
  - Either the teacher **or** his students **leave** the lights on.
  - Neither the students **nor** the teacher **leaves** the lights on.

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- Compound subjects using **substitutes** for **and** are not necessarily plural.
  - along with
  - also
  - in addition to
  - combined with
  - as well as
  - with
  - besides
  - accompanied by
  - together with



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## Subject-Verb Agreement

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- Mike and his sisters have arrived.
- Mike, along with his sisters, has arrived.
  
- Rachel and Mike eat lunch together.
- Rachel, as well as Mike, eats lunch at 11:30 a.m.

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- In fact, it's a rule of English that what comes between the subject and the verb **does not affect** the verb:
  - **Mike**, along with his sisters, **has** arrived.
  - The blue-haired **grandmother** whose grandchildren and great-grandchildren number 23 **is** eager to take a bus trip anywhere – alone!

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- Nevertheless, one group of words violates that fundamental English rule: **indefinite pronouns**.
  - all            ■ more
  - none        ■ most
  - some        ■ any
- What falls **between** these subjects and their verbs determines whether they are singular or plural.

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## Subject-Verb Agreement

- **All** of the **coffee is** gone!
- **All** of the coffee **beans are** spoiled.
  
- **Some** of the **books still look** new.
- **Some** of the **manuscript looks** fresh.
  
- **None** of the **students have** arrived.
- **None** of the **staff has** arrived.

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## Keep it friendly!

- Be sure your subject and verb **agree!**



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## Avoid fragments!

- A sentence must have a subject and a verb and be a complete thought! Otherwise, it's a fragment.
    - Fishing is one of the oldest sports. And can be one of the most relaxing.
- no subject (no actor)
- Fishing **is** one of the oldest sports **and can be** one of the most relaxing.

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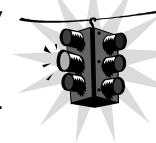
## Avoid run-on errors.

- Run-on sentences occur when two or more sentences run together, making it difficult for the reader to follow.
- These are all run-ons:
  - I took out the trash last **night now** it's your turn.
  - I took out the trash last **night, now** it's your turn.
  - I took out the trash last **night and now** it's your turn.

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## Run-on Fixes

- Just making the run-on into two sentences isn't always the best solution.
- Instead, caution your reader to slow down for a second but then to keep reading.
  - If the period is a red light, think of the semicolon as a yellow light – it slows down the reader but doesn't require a full stop.



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## Direct your reader ...

### Red light – full stop:

- Use a period:
  - I took out the trash last **night. Now** it's your turn.

### Yellow light – (caution) slow down:

- Use a **semicolon** between two sentences that you want the reader to read together:
  - I took out the trash last **night; now** it's your turn.

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## Direct your reader ...

### Red light – full stop:

- Use a period:
  - I took out the trash last **night. Now** it's your turn.

### Yellow light – (caution) slow down:

- Use a **comma** between two sentences joined by a **coordinating conjunction**:
  - I took out the trash last **night, but now** it's your turn.

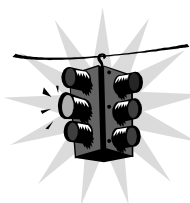
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## Coordinating Conjunctions

- **For**
- **And**
- **Nor**
- **But**
- **Or**
- **Yet**
- **So**
- There are only 7 coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS).
  - Jay sent me, for he can't be here himself.
  - Jay sent me, and I'm not sure where to go.
  - Jay sent me, so here I am!
  - Jay sent me, or at least that's what the email told me.

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## Direct your reader!



- Say what you mean to say – **completely**.
- Be sure what you write makes sense logically (subject and verb **agree**).
- Direct your reader so that **you** control your message!

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